

Teachers College Case Story

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What Teachers College is saying about the Book ScanCenter:

“The touch screen interface makes it easy to save the scan or e-mail it without having to do additional steps, like finding and attaching the file. And then there’s the book edge. Occasionally people ask for things that are more fragile and it’s much easier on the bindings.”

Michelle Pronovost, Services Supervisor
Gottesman Libraries, Teachers College
New York, New York

About Teachers College and Gottesman Libraries

Founded in 1887, Teachers College joined with Columbia University in 1898 to become that Ivy League school’s Education faculty. Gottesman serves as the pedagogical library for the University, and is one of the nation’s largest and most comprehensive research libraries in the field of education. Teachers College is committed to the advanced study of education, psychology, and the health services professions, and Gottesman houses extensive research collections related to those fields, with about 500,000 printed volumes and a substantial non-print collection that includes both visual and electronic sources. Distinctive collections include historical and contemporary textbooks; early catalogs and histories of many educational institutions; school system administrative reports, surveys and curriculum guides; rare works on 15th to 19th century education; and children’s and picture books dating back to before 1900. In addition to serving those affiliated with Teachers College and the rest of Columbia University, Gottesman Libraries make their collection available to researchers and scholars throughout the world.

Scannx Book Center: More Bang for the Buck

Gottesman Libraries had two HP Scanners connected to desktop computers, but found that patrons had a hard time figuring them out. Then Services Supervisor Michelle Pronovost became a student at the Fashion Institute of Technology at State University of New York and started using the self-service scanner there. “I thought it would be great for us as well,” said Pronovost.

They researched other scanning options, but found that the Scannx Book ScanCenter, with its combination of intuitive 15” touchscreen and oversized book-edge scanner, was the easiest-to-use option, and offered the biggest bang for the buck. “Some were way more expensive – probably double the price,” said Pronovost. “The touch screen interface makes it easy to save the scan or e-mail it without having to do additional steps, like finding and attaching the file. And then there’s the book edge. Occasionally people ask for things that are more fragile and it’s much easier on the bindings.”

Also, Scannx Book ScanCenter is the first self-service scanner that can send scans directly to an iPhone, iPad or other tablet or smart phone, in addition to USB, e-mail and GoogleDocs™. Patrons use the easy-to-follow touchscreen instructions to scan their documents, and the ScanCenter generates and displays a QR code, which can be read by using a free QR code reader app. Simply hold a mobile device up to the screen, and the scanned image transfers instantly.

“It seemed like a neat feature,” said Pronovost. “Basically, we got that additional feature for the same price.” And, while it may seem futuristic to some, Pronovost has noticed that a lot of her fellow students are increasingly using tablets and smart phones for research.

The library has not been tracking how students are using the Scannx Book ScanCenter – although e-mail records show that 678 scans were sent by e-mail in the first 11 weeks. “I definitely see a lot of people in there with USBs,” said Pronovost. Still others are scanning to GoogleDocs, especially since the school recently partnered with Google so that every student who attends Teachers College gets a Gmail account. “It’s nice that, with the e-mail and smart phone, Google, etc., there are so many other options,” she said, because it means she sees fewer students scrounging to borrow a flash drive.

Easy-to-Use and Easy on the Environment

Gottesman installed the Scannx Book ScanCenter in a study room near the circulation desk, assuming that students might have questions. But there haven’t been any. “We’ve only gotten positive comments,” said Pronovost. “We have a lot of students who are older and coming back to school that have a hard time with technology, but they haven’t had problems with it either.”

In fact, the Scannx has proved so easy to use, that the staff has started encouraging those having difficulty with the copiers to use the ScanCenter instead. “Often, when you’re photocopying something, like a journal article, the sizing and alignment will come out wrong,” said Pronovost. “We suggest that they scan it and print it instead. The scanner auto-detects the size and shows you in preview what you just scanned, then you can rotate it, zoom in and out, crop it and correct it. It seems to come out perfectly.”

Recently, Teachers College got a new Ninja printing system that allows students to print 20 pages a week for free, then charges for each additional page. Pronovost was delighted to discover that the Scannx Book ScanCenter integrated seamlessly with the new printing system. “I didn’t know that was possible,” she said.

Pronovost expects the combination of a free, easy-to-use ScanCenter, a pay-to-print system, and a growing acceptance of digital materials, to lead to real reductions in paper use. “Teachers College has a Go Green initiative, and we’re always looking for ways to be more eco-friendly,” she said. “They can add this to their list.”

The Next Generation of Document Capture and Delivery

She even sees a future in which cloud-based technology like the Scannx Book ScanCenter could make photocopiers obsolete. “Already, we moved our older copiers to

another location in the library that's not as accessible, and we haven't gotten complaints or questions about 'where did the copiers go?'" she said. "The company we work with on the copiers even told me they thought that copiers were (becoming obsolete) and wanted to move to scanning. But they wanted to charge for scans, and I don't think the students would like that. They expect it to be free."